

Foreign lottery tickets

Many Wisconsin residents enjoy playing the state lottery games with hopes of becoming a lucky winner and taking home the big money. But, questions are being asked about Australian, Canadian, German and Spanish lottery ticket offers received in the mail. These lotteries promise what looks like a better chance of winning millions of dollars.

While it's uncertain if you'll ever "hit the jackpot" playing a lottery, one thing is sure: companies selling foreign lottery tickets are breaking the law. Federal postal regulations prohibit the mailing of lottery, raffle and bingo advertisements. It's okay to buy lottery tickets if you are visiting another country or state. It's illegal to buy tickets through the mail—with cash, check or credit card.

Some of the advertisements may not even mention the words "lottery," "raffle," or "bingo." Instead, the consumer is told about prizes that will be awarded.

Despite the law, mailings are still being sent from promoters pushing foreign lottery games. Recently, a mailing for the Spanish lottery offered a player's kit for a fee of almost \$100. Some companies allow consumers to buy tickets with a credit card.

There is also a strong possibility that American buyers don't have much of a chance to collect any winnings since they are usually sent a purchase confirmation instead of the actual tickets. The ticket is needed as proof of purchase to collect a prize.

Foreign lotteries may be too good to be true.

A brochure called **Guide to Contests and Promotions** has more information about contest and sweepstakes laws. For more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at:

(800) 422-7128

FAX: (608) 224-4939

TTY: (608) 224-5058

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datcpHotline@datcp.state.wi.us

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